

Children and Adolescents with Seizure Disorders

How Can You Help?

Seizure disorders occur when a disturbance in the brain produces changes in awareness or sensation, involuntary body movements, or changes in behavior lasting from a few seconds to a few minutes. Seizure disorders are the 4th most common nervous system problem and can lead to learning problems that require special help or accommodations.¹ A seizure disorder affects people differently depending on age, types of seizures, response to treatment, and whether the person has other health issues. For some, seizures are easily controlled with medicine and eventually outgrown. For others, a seizure disorder can create difficult challenges throughout their lives.² School health services can identify students with seizure disorders and work with parents and health care providers to meet both urgent and nonurgent needs during the school day by developing an individualized health care plan.³

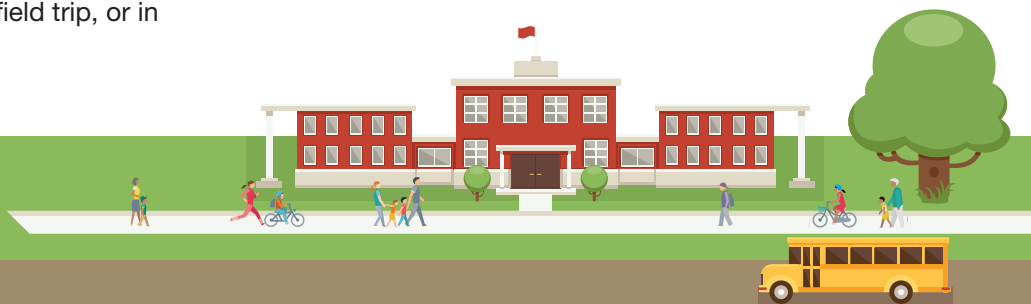
What's Happening at School?

Knowing the answers to the following questions can help you support your child's school to address seizure disorders. If you don't know the answers to these questions, check out the school handbook or school website, attend a school wellness meeting or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting, or simply ask your child's teacher.

1. Is there a full-time registered nurse in the school building at all times or a school-based health center to help students with chronic medical conditions or with emergencies?
2. How does the school identify and share information about which students have seizure disorders?
3. Does the school require that each student with a seizure disorder have a school seizure action plan?
4. Does the school allow students to carry their own medication at school?
5. What are the school protocols if a student is having a seizure at school, during after-school activities, on the school bus, on a field trip, or in cases of emergency or lockdown?
6. Are other school staff, such as teachers, bus drivers, and food services staff, trained to recognize and respond to a student that may be having a seizure?
7. What is the policy for student participation in physical activity (e.g., recess or classroom activity breaks) or physical education at school if he or she has a diagnosis of seizure disorder?
8. Is there a bullying prevention policy in the school or district that discourages bullying or encourages awareness or anti-stigma of students with medical conditions?



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Ideas for Parents

You can be involved in your child's school by **attending** meetings, workshops, or training events offered by the school; **communicating** with school staff and other parents; **volunteering** for school events or in your child's classroom; **reinforcing** healthy messages and practices your child learns at school; **helping** make decisions about health in the school; and **being part** of community activities supported by the school. Here are some specific ideas for how you can support your child's school in addressing seizure disorders.

- Have an ongoing conversation with your child to discuss their seizures, their feelings about having a seizure disorder, and if they feel safe and supported at school.⁴
- Work with your child's health care provider to coordinate care with school health services by establishing a school seizure action plan and the timely completion of required school forms. Encourage communication between school health services and your child's health care provider.
- Provide emergency medication to the school nurse or other school health official.
- Ensure that there is a current individualized health care plan, and assist with setting goals.³
- Keep your emergency contact information up-to-date with the teacher and school nurse.
- Communicate with your child's teachers, counselors, and school health services staff regarding your child's seizures and how they are coping while at school.
- Volunteer with your child, or partner with an advocacy organization (e.g., Epilepsy Foundation) to help provide leadership at school health events, and to educate staff and other families about seizure disorders.
- Join a group, such as the PTA, school wellness council, or school health advisory council, that addresses the needs of a supportive and healthy school environment.⁵
- Share research-based websites or written materials about seizure disorders with teachers, nurses, and administrators, when possible, (e.g., <http://www.cdc.gov/epilepsy/index.html>).



Check out additional resources for parents related to the school nutrition environment and services, physical education and physical activity, and managing chronic health conditions at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/P4HS.htm>.

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